

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended) A tree limb apparatus, comprising:

a base structure for mounting to an elevatable support;

a generally annular tubular frame mounted rearwardly from said support and bounding a central area for accommodating the lower portion of a tree trunk, said frame having a forward gap for receiving said tree trunk when the apparatus is advanced towards a tree;

means for selectively opening and closing said forward gap, including

- (i) an internal channel through said tubular frame;
- (ii) a part-circular slider tube seated within said channel for rotational movement therethrough, said slider tube having a space between remote ends thereof congruent with said forward gap of the frame; and
- (iii) hydraulic means for rotating the slider tube within the internal channel of the frame between a position in which said forward gap is open to receive [[a]] said tree trunk into the central area of the [[fame]] frame and a position in which it is closed around [[a]] said tree trunk

received within the central area of the frame.

Claim 2 (original): Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said generally annular tubular frame comprises two hollow arcuate tube sections fixedly mounted in circular orientation at opposite sides of said base structure.

Claim 3 (currently amended): Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said hydraulic means for rotating the slider tube comprises a hydraulic valve engaging said slider tube and operatively mounted to said base structure.

Claim 4 (new): A tree limb apparatus, comprising:

a base structure for mounting to an elevatable support;

a generally annular tubular frame mounted rearwardly from said support and bounding a central area for accommodating the lower portion of a tree trunk, said frame having a forward gap for receiving said tree trunk when the apparatus is advanced towards a tree;

means for selectively opening and closing said forward gap, including

- (i) an internal channel through said tubular frame;
- (ii) a part-circular slider tube seated within said channel for rotational movement therethrough, said slider tube having a space between

remote ends thereof congruent with said forward gap of the frame;

and

- (iii) means for rotating the slider tube within the internal channel of the frame between a position in which said forward gap is open to receive said tree trunk into the central area of the frame and a position in which it is closed around said tree trunk received within the central area of the frame;

said generally annular tubular frame comprising two hollow arcuate tube sections fixedly mounted in circular orientation at opposite sides of said base structure; and

said means for rotating the slider tube comprising a hydraulic valve engaging said slider tube and operatively mounted to said base structure.